



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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MOTHER AND SONS SENTENCED TO A TOTAL OF MORE THAN 20 YEARS IN PRISON

PHOENIX, Ariz.)– Julieta Franco-Beltran (47), Rodrigo Plaza-Franco (25) and Ambrosio Plaza-Franco (28), all citizens of Mexico were sentenced here on June 1, 2006 by U.S. District Judge Frederick J. Martone. Julieta Franco-Beltran was sentenced in two separate alien smuggling cases. In the first case, she was found guilty by a federal jury in 2003 of Conspiracy to Harbor Illegal Aliens and was sentenced to 87 months. In the second matter, she and her sons pleaded guilty to bringing aliens to the United States. Under the terms of the their plea agreements the following sentences were imposed: Franco-Beltran – 60 months; Rodrigo Plaza-Franco -- 87 months; and Ambrosio Plaza-Franco -- 57 months. All three defendants sentences will run consecutive to any other federal sentence currently being served.

The case in which Julieta Franco-Beltran was convicted at trial showed that she rented an apartment at the Glendale Groves Condominiums in Glendale, AZ where, 32 undocumented aliens were held at gunpoint on October 31, 2003. On that date, seven other smugglers were arrested and charged with harboring the illegal aliens and hostage taking. Also found in relation to the harboring were two assault rifles, a .38 special handgun, and almost \$40,000 of alien smuggling proceeds. Further investigation revealed that the defendant arranged and paid for the rental of apartment #112, a mere six days prior to the discovery of the illegal aliens, knowing that the apartment would be used to harbor undocumented aliens. A witness at trial testified that upon inquiring of the defendant's whereabouts at the apartments, the witness was told that "the lady in charge" was at another apartment. Evidence at trial revealed that the defendant rented at least four apartments in 2003. The defendant had no legitimate income but was able to pay, in cash, thousands more than the usual monthly rental price for three of the four apartments.

In 2005, Franco-Beltran and her sons pleaded guilty to bringing aliens to the United States. The defendants all admitted to running an alien stash house located at 2529 E. Atlanta Avenue, Phoenix, AZ. The defendants admitted being involved in an organization that brought undocumented aliens into the United States from Mexico. The defendants agreed that the aliens would illegally enter Arizona from Mexico and would be transported from an area near the border to the aforementioned residence in Phoenix, AZ. Some of the aliens harbored at the East Atlanta address were involved in a serious car accident in Colorado after leaving the stash house in Phoenix on the way to their final destinations within the United States. Judge Martone determined that at least one of those aliens suffered life threatening injuries.

The investigation preceding the indictments was conducted by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the Pinal County Sheriff's Department.

The prosecution is being handled by Lisa Jennis Settel, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Phoenix, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-04-1169-PHX-FJM and CR-05-577-PHX-FJM
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